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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

All media lead with the terror attack in the town Hadera on Wednesday, where a suicide bomber from the West Bank town of Kabatiya blew himself up in the marketplace, claiming the lives of five Israelis, leaving 30 people wounded. All media lead with the expected IDF reaction.

The Jerusalem Post reports that Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was in retaliation for the killing by IDF troops of the organization's top military commander, Luay Sa'adi, and one of his aides in Tulkarm on Monday." In response to the suicide bombing, Israel has decided on a series of measures to be taken against terrorist infrastructure, specifically Islamic Jihad, the Post said. Ha'aretz added that at a meeting of the IDF General Staff on Wednesday, officers said the Palestinian public must be made to understand that Israeli measures to ease Palestinian life, such as reopening border crossings, do not mesh with suicide bombings inside Israel. Ma'ariv reports that the defense minister last night gave a green light to a large scale operation in northern Samaria, which will include seizing large territories, wide-scale detentions, and targeted killings of HAMAS and Islamic Jihad leaders in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli defense establishment again held Syria responsible and will ask the US Administration to increase pressure on Syria, Ma'ariv reported. The paper cited "prime minister's bureau sources" as blaming Abu-Mazin for PA inaction, and that "lengthy deliberations" were held last night between Sharon's bureau and the State Department, mainly in the wake of HAMAS leaders' threats to kidnap Israelis." The article says, "the Americans got the message." Also in the wake of the attack, the Karni crossing of the Gaza Strip, which opened yesterday morning after being closed for several days due to the Qassam shelling of Sderot, closed again yesterday afternoon, Ha'aretz said. The Jerusalem Post reported that Communications Minister Dalia Itzik canceled a meeting with her PA counterpart Sabri Saidam in the wake of the attack. Radio and leading media quoted White House Press Secretary McClellan condemning the suicide bombing "in

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the strongest possible terms," sending condolences to the families of victims, urging the PA to do more to end violence and prevent terrorist attacks from being carried out.

Israel Radio reports that the Israeli National Police is deploying large numbers in the wake of the terror attack and warning of other possible terror attacks. Deployments include roadblocks, increased patrols in crowded places and the public transport system.

Israel Radio reported that before dawn this morning, the Israeli Air Force attacked an open area used for launching Kassam rockets in Gaza, including a road leading to the town of Beit Hanoun.

Yediot and Israel Radio quote a senior IDF officer as saying that the separation fence does not have complete security value because the crossings have become weak points, that there is no effective supervision of the crossings, that soldiers are not trained, and that monitoring equipment is missing.

Vice Premier Shimon Peres will use a meeting Thursday with visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to seek information on a new Iranian satellite, Israel Radio reported. According to the report, Iran plans to send up a Russian-manufactured satellite in the near future, which it says is for research purposes, but which Israel suspects will be used for espionage.

Ha'aretz reported that Lavrov on Wednesday "brushed off" Israel's call for quick international action against Iran over its nuclear program, saying the matter is "too serious to be guided by politics." Lavrov also suggested that Russia will not pursue UN sanctions against Syria. At a joint news conference with Lavrov, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said Israel believes Iran is "very close" to obtaining the knowledge to produce a nuclear bomb. "That is why all of us should be very determined to move the Iranian (issue) to the Security Council," he said. Lavrov said that Russia will follow the lead of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is investigating the Iranian nuclear program, and believes that talk of sanctions is premature.

Ha'aretz reported that in the wake of a meeting in Cairo yesterday between Defense Minister Mofaz and President Mubarak, the parties agreed that there will be no Israeli presence at the Rafah crossing into Egypt, that a yet unnamed international force will supervise it, and that Israelis will supervise the Kerem Shalom crossing into Israel. The parties also agreed to start a dialogue on the global terror threat.

Yediot reported on hilltop youth resumed yesterday four new settlement outposts in Judea and Samaria. The outposts that were established yesterday simultaneously are in Hebron, the Etzion Bloc, Kedumim and Elon Moreh. The decision to establish the settlement outposts was not made by the Settlers Council, but rather by teenagers who received the encouragement of adults such as Daniela Weiss and Nadia Matar. Kol Israel reported this morning that last night the police removed three sukkas built by these teenagers. Three settlers who resisted were arrested.

The media also extensively covered reactions to remarks by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who called for the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map" and "a world without Zionism." Ha'aretz cited Vice Premier Shimon Peres as saying that Iran should be expelled from the United Nations. "I don't see such a crazy declaration being done by a head of state, a member of the United Nations; it is unbearable. He cannot remain a member," Peres said. The report added that the United States, Britain, France, Spain, and Canada condemned the Iranian president's remarks.

Ha'aretz and other media reported that Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom yesterday announced the reopening of the Israeli Embassy in Wellington and invited his New Zealand counterpart to visit Israel. Shalom met in Jerusalem on Wednesday with New Zealand Ambassador to Israel Jan Henderson for the first time since the crisis in diplomatic relations between the two states. Henderson is based in Ankara rather than in Israel. A government statement noted that the meeting would be the first of its kind "since the incident with the Mossad."

Mideast

Summary:

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yedi'ot Aharonot on the expected IDF operation in northern Samaria, saying: "In the short range, the volume of terror attacks is liable to rise" in acts of revenge; "in the medium range, the volume of terror attacks is likely to drop," as Israel eliminates terrorists; but "in the long run, the assassination operations won't change much" because "terrorists who are killed will be replaced by a new generation of terrorists, not less murderous than their predecessors."

Mass-circulation, pluralist *Yediot Aharonot* carries a commentary by military correspondent Alex Fishman in the wake of the Hadera terror attack, saying: "Israel built a spectacular fence, invested millions, but built into it no fewer than 30 crossings...A day will come when someone is going to go to jail for that fiasco."

Pluralist *Ma'ariv* carries a front page article by diplomatic correspondent Ben Kaspit saying, "We have to get used to it: this will happen occasionally. One organization or another (almost always Islamic Jihad) will manage to carry out a terror attack inside Israel, hitting it in its soft underbelly, reminding us from where we've come and where, apparently, we're headed." The maximum we can expect, in this situation, is to maintain a tolerable rate of terror attacks, one every few months instead of a few every month. and the time has come to realize that the separation fence is not a magic solution."

Conservative, independent *Jerusalem Post* carries an article by former cabinet member Natan Sharansky saying that "The central feature of Bush's policy in our region is his passionate belief in the possibility of a democratic Middle East. but in Israel this policy is viewed with deep skepticism." By Israel's silence on Syria and by "withholding our support for the American policy of democratization in our region and by adhering to a shortsighted policy aimed at propping up strong and friendly dictatorships, or weak and antagonistic ones, we are committing a grave strategic error. Again we are missing a historic opportunity to bring peace and security to the region."

Block Quotes:

I. "The Lessons of Hadera"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist *Yediot*: "In the short range, the volume of terror attacks is liable to rise: as we learned yesterday in the Hadera market, Islamic Jihad knows how to exact revenge; in the medium range, the volume of terror attacks is likely to drop: the handlers will either be killed or arrested. In the long range, the assassination operations won't change much, and that is what is so very frustrating. The terrorists who are killed will be replaced by a new generation of terrorists, no less murderous than their predecessors No one promised the citizens of Israel that tranquility would reign the day after the withdrawal from Gaza. If there was anyone who harbored hopes of that kind, those hopes were in vain. The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza rectified a distortion. It did not make peace. The problems remain as they were. One, terrorism that is maintained by external sponsors, first and foremost Iran. Iran is gradually becoming Israel's number one problem. Regrettably, Iran is a problem that Israel cannot solve on its own. We need America's strong arm, but America's arms are tied down in Iraq. The American administration resolved to go on the offensive in the Middle East. What a shame that it lost its way and attacked the wrong country....The second problem is the Palestinian Authority, which is gradually disintegrating. The catastrophe of the matter is that it is disintegrating on us.... The third problem is [that] the fence. is permeable. But that isn't the fence's fault: it was built to be deliberately porous. Officials in the security establishment prefer to suppress that scandal, for political reasons. Israelis, both Jews and Arabs, continue to cross back and forth across the fence without any real form of inspection'We built a concrete wall,' one high-ranking officer said to me, 'but fitted it with paper doors.' That is not a tragedy; it's stupidity."

II. "The Great Fiasco"

Mass-circulation, pluralist *Yediot Aharonot* carries a front-page commentary by military correspondent Alex Fishman: "Yesterday, after the terror attack in Hadera, we found ourselves back at square one, back in the same place we were in 2004. the army is going back at full force and without a time limit to northern Samaria, from which it withdrew just two months ago....To combat terrorism successfully. one needs to be, physically, in the place where the infrastructure is formed and to dismantle it before it sets in motion a 'ticking bomb,' and that is what is going to happen from now on. but that all is contingent upon the political echelon being strong enough to withstand the international pressure that is certain to follow...This escalation of Israel's offensive tactics is being launched, actually, to cover up for the ongoing fiasco of the separation fence. Instead of being a buffer, it

is more like Swiss cheese.. Israel built a spectacular fence, invested millions-but built into it no fewer than 30 crossings. The Palestinians have already learned that the security inspection at the crossings for Israelis is abysmal, unprofessional, turning them into a highway for terrorists and illegal aliens into Israel. Why look for a hole in the fence when you can take the king's road? A day will come when someone is going to go to jail for that fiasco. Someone is going to pay the price for the stupid decision that produced a situation in which after four and a half years of enormous investment-the citizens of Israel still do not have adequate protection against terrorism."

III. "Start Getting Used to It"

Pluralist Ma'ariv carries a front page article by diplomatic correspondent Ben Kaspit: "We have to get used to it: this will happen occasionally. One organization or another (almost always Islamic Jihad) will manage to carry out a terror attack inside Israel, hitting it in its soft underbelly, reminding us from where we've come and where, apparently, we're headed.. And still, after all these justifications, the sterling logic, and the war against the Islamic Jihad infrastructure in Tulkarm. it's hard not to remember one man, Fathi Shakaki, who was the head of Islamic Jihad when it was still a small, odd organization, and who was assassinated, so foreign sources say, ten years ago yesterday by the Mosad in Malta. His assassination made us all happy. and made Islamic Jihad wane. but from all of this waning we got the most lethal terror organization around.. Islamic Jihad today is the most dangerous organization, because it has no God. It does not take part in the elections, it cares not for Palestinian public opinion, it has no rules or constraints, and the only thing motivating it is to kill as many Jews in as short a time possible. So long as comrade Ramadan Shalah, who lives in Damascus, is satisfied. What can we understand from all this? Nothing in particular, except that this is a constant headache for the security establishment leaders on the one hand, and those in charge of it (Sharon and Mofaz) on the other.. The maximum we can expect, in this situation, is to maintain a tolerable rate of terror attacks, one every few months instead of a few every month. and the time has come to realize that the separation fence is not a magic solution."

IV. "Silence on Syria"

Cpmservatove. independent Jerusalem Post carries an article by former cabinet member Natan Sharansky who says: "It is axiomatic that the bond between the United States and Israel is built not merely on common interests, but also on the shared values of our citizens, in particular our mutual love of freedom and democracy. Because of this strong bond, our alliance can weather many disagreements between our governments - whether over issues such as the potential construction of the E1 corridor between Ma'aleh Adumim and Jerusalem, or divergent interpretations of President George W. Bush's April 2004 letter to the Israeli prime minister....Unfortunately, upon closer scrutiny, the axiom of shared values has an exception when it comes to promoting democracy among our neighbors. The central feature of Bush's policy in our region is his passionate belief in the possibility of a democratic Middle East, a belief buttressed by his conviction that democratization is the only sure path to peace in the region. In Israel this policy is viewed with deep skepticism, with most policymakers in Jerusalem considering it at best naive, at worst dangerously misguided. Our government's rejection of Bush's democratic vision for the region has already had profound consequences. The road map is a case in point. When on June 24, 2002, Bush delivered his revolutionary speech about the democratization of the Palestinian Authority being the critical condition for advancing the peace process, the Israeli government did absolutely nothing. We produced no initiative. We formulated no plans. We didn't even hold a meeting. With our government silent, the State Department shifted into high gear....That is how an Israeli leadership which thought it was gaining time by doing nothing was actually forced to accept the road map. And what is Israel's position on this issue? Does it support changes that could replace a dictatorial, hostile and aggressive regime with one that is more peaceful and democratic? Hardly. In fact, anonymous voices coming from the highest government quarters express strong reservations concerning the idea. Why? Because these officials fear that change in Syria would bring "chaos" to the region or, what they see as even

worse should Syrian democracy take root, Israel's being forced to negotiate the future of the Golan Heights.... By withholding our support for the American policy of democratization in our region and by adhering to a shortsighted policy aimed at propping up strong and friendly dictatorships, or weak and antagonistic ones, we are committing a grave strategic error. Again we are missing a historic opportunity to bring peace and security to the region."

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